

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action of January 27, 2004. With this response, claims 1 and 2 are amended, the specification is amended and Figures 1-3 are amended. Entry, consideration and favorable action are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner requested that Figures 1-3 be identified as prior art. With this Amendment, those Figures have been amended accordingly.

In paragraphs A and B of the Office Action, the claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Various language in the claims and specification has been amended to address this issue. It is believed that the rejection may be withdrawn.

On page 4 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 based upon Ahn (5,887,622). It is believed that the pending claims are patentably distinct from Ahn. The valve assembly of claim 1 of the present application comprises a stopper 150, with both ends positioned stationery on the valve plate 110; a fixing member 180, 180' securing one end of a discharge valve 130 and both ends of the stopper 150 onto the valve plate 110; and a first settlement unit 135, 115 positioning the discharge valve 130 on the stopper 150 and securely supporting the discharge valve 130 in place.

In contrast, the valve assembly of the cited reference US5,887,622 comprises a backing spring 33 (referred to as a 'stopper' by the Examiner) is secured to the valve plate 35 by one end, a stopper 31 also secured to the valve plate 35 by one end, and an embossed part 36 and the protrusion part 44 securing the backing spring 33 and the stopper 31 to the valve plate 35 and to the discharge valve 34, respectively.

In reviewing the structures and effects based on the above, it is noted that the valve assembly of claim 1 of the present application provides the advantage of effective securing and support of the discharge valve 130 in two places, i.e., in

the fixing member 180' and in the first settlement unit 135, 115, whereas US5,887,622 could not achieve the same effects because it discloses the discharge valve being secured and supported only in one place, i.e., in the embossed part 36 and the protrusion part 44. In conclusion, the present invention provides effective support in case of lateral twisting of the discharge valve 130, while US5,887,622 does not.

Claims 3 and 4 were indicated to contain allowable subject matter.

It is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance. Consideration and favorable action are respectfully requested.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTMAN, CHAMPLIN & KELLY, P.A.

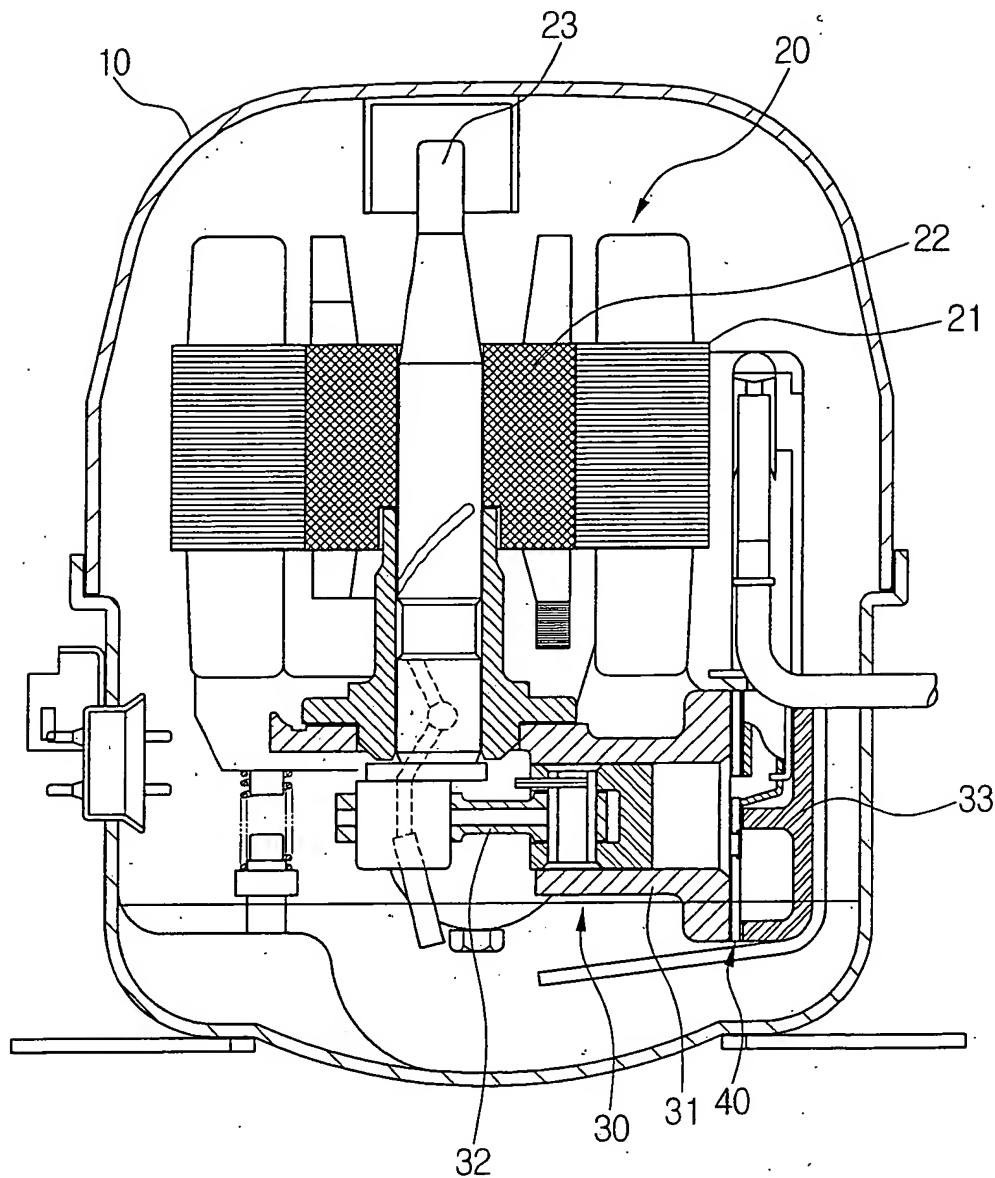
By: 

Judson K. Champlin, Reg. No. 34,797  
Suite 1600 - International Centre  
900 Second Avenue South  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-3319  
Phone: (612) 334-3222 Fax: (612) 334-3312

JKC:lrs



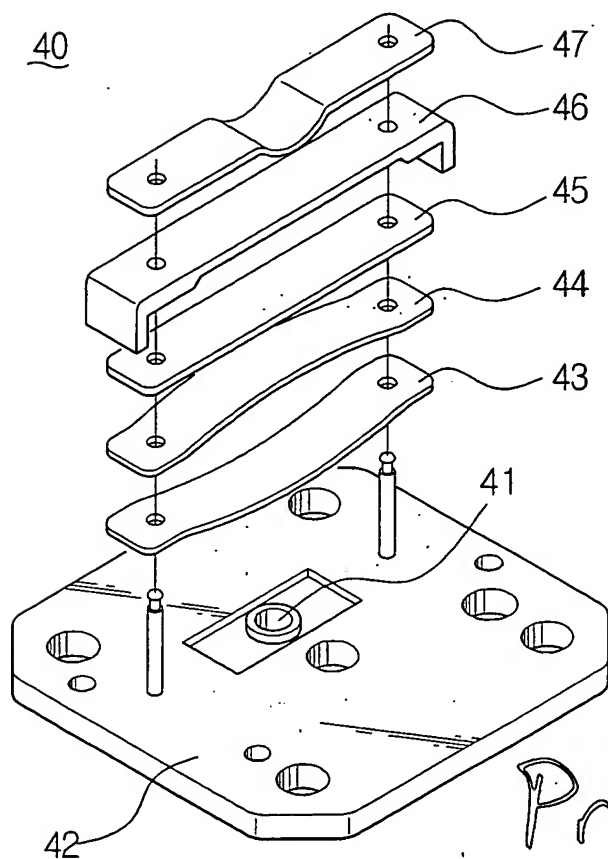
FIG.1



Prior Art

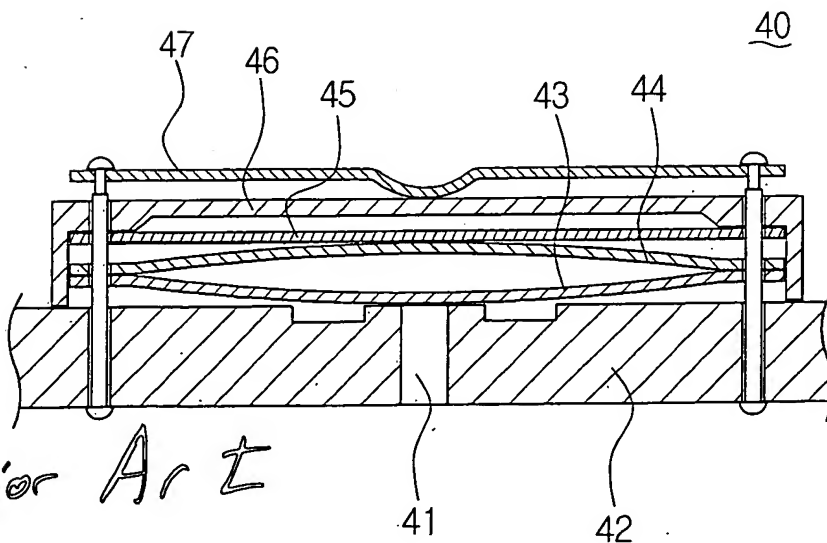


FIG.2



*Prior Art*

FIG.3



*Prior Art*